

to reprogram \$1 billion of our defense budget for readiness.

We struck a prudent balance between short-term readiness and longer-term modernization, so that our fighting forces will have the cutting edge technology they need to avoid long-term readiness problems, and to dominate the battlefields of the future.

The service chiefs and the commanders in chief have worked tirelessly also to improve the quality of life for our men and women in uniform and to recruit and retain a new generation of Americans for our all-volunteer forces. I want to thank them for that and say that I am well aware that we're going to have to do more in this area as well.

For example, the services have established standards to reduce the burden on our troops of the high tempo of operations and deployments. We've reduced the number and the duration of some deployments overseas, putting units on standby status in the United States instead.

Again, I want to call on Congress to support our ongoing engagement for peace in Bosnia in a way that does not force us to take money away from readiness and training. We will continue to monitor readiness, to deal quickly and effectively with any problems that do arise.

And now I want to hear directly from Secretary Cohen and from our senior military leaders on this critical issue to our security. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:17 p.m. at the National Defense University at Fort McNair.

### **Statement on the Appointment of the Assistant to the President and Special Counsel and Two Senior Advisors to the President**

*September 15, 1998*

Today I have asked Gregory Craig to join the White House staff as Assistant to the President and Special Counsel, reporting to me in connection with matters arising from the Referral submitted by the Office of Independent Counsel to Congress. Joining Deputy Chief of Staff John Podesta, the Counsel to the President, Charles Ruff, and my personal attorney, David Kendall, in their rep-

resentation before House Judiciary Committee, Mr. Craig will quarterback the response to the Referral. Mr. Craig currently serves as Director of Policy and Planning at the Department of State. I have known him for many years and have great confidence in his judgment and ability.

The White House has also added former Chief Senate Liaison and executive director of the Senate Campaign Committee Steve Ricchetti and former White House Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs Susan Brophy to work as Senior Advisors to the President.

### **Proclamation 7121—National Hispanic Heritage Month, 1998**

*September 15, 1998*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

The presence of Hispanics on this continent predates the founding of our Nation, and, as among the first to settle in the New World, Hispanics and their descendants have had a profound and lasting influence on American history, values, and culture. Since the arrival of the earliest Spanish settlers more than 400 years ago, millions of Hispanic men and women have come to the United States from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba and other Caribbean regions, Central America, South America, and Spain, in search of peace, freedom, and a more prosperous future. They brought with them a deep commitment to family and community, a strong work ethic, and an unwavering belief in the American Dream.

In a Nation that derives so much of its strength from many cultures and races, Hispanic Americans are a thriving force in our society and a vital part of our economy. For example, businesses started and operated by Hispanic women constitute one of the fastest-growing categories of small business in the United States today. This entrepreneurial spirit has contributed to the strongest U.S. economy in a generation.